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Storytime™



MEET PEACH BOY! A hero
with added dumplings!

BABA YAGA

**Pippi Longstocking, The Spider and the Fly,
The Green Children of Woolpit and MORE!**



“Ysiad! Ysiad!” they called.

Weird and wonderful stories!

Did you ever hear of green children,
boys inside peaches, girls living with
gazelles, and huts built on chicken legs?
No? Well, find out more inside!

This issue belongs to:

Storytime™ magazine is published
every month by **Luma Works**, Studio
2B18, Southbank Technopark, 90
London Rd, London, SE1 6LN.

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CORRECTION: Heartfelt apologies to the
illustrators we incorrectly credited in Issue 25.
Anniversary excitement got the better of us.
All brilliant and all deserving of full credit!

Andres Salinas: Ganesha

Òscar Julve: The Fox and the Cat

Melanie Matthews: The Reluctant Dragon

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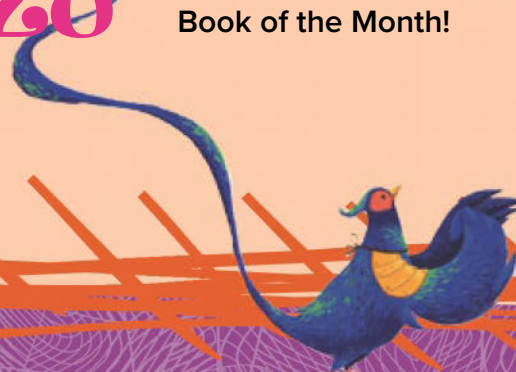
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The Green Children of Woolpit

Long ago, in a strange and distant place, a little girl and a little boy were looking after their father's herd of cattle.

It was a summer's day like any other – the clouds were purple and the moon was hanging heavy in the sky. The little girl was entertaining herself with a song and the boy was sitting back, chewing on a bright green stalk of grass.



Suddenly, one of the cows broke loose and ran towards the mountain. The children didn't want to get in trouble with their father, so they ran after the cow, shouting her name.

"Ysiad! Ysiad!" they called, but the cow mooed loudly and disappeared into a rocky cave. It looked dark and scary in there, and it made the children nervous, so they clung tightly to each other and shouted after the cow again.

As they ventured further into the cave, their eyes got used to the darkness, and they could see that the walls

were sparkling with vivid green and purple crystals. The sight was so enchanting, they quite forgot their fears and ran in to investigate.

As they went deeper, they could no longer hear their cow, but they could hear gently tinkling bells. The sound was so delightful, they couldn't help but follow it, and they were soon in the dark depths of the cave. Eventually, the tinkling became a loud jingle and, before they knew it, the children had walked out through a cave opening and found themselves in a deep pit. ➡



As they stepped outside, the sunlight was so dazzling, the children could barely open their eyes. They squinted and called for their cow, but she was nowhere to be seen. Filled with fear, they tried to dash back into the cave, but the entrance they came through had disappeared! Terribly confused, the girl and boy hugged each other.



Now, it just so happened that some local farmhands were in the habit of taking their lunch by the edge of the pit. When they saw two scared little

children at the bottom, they were greatly surprised – even more so when they saw how strange the children looked. They wore outfits made from leaves and stalks, and they had the strangest green skin and deep green eyes!

“What are you two doing down there?” shouted one of the farmhands. But the children just cowered and cried.

The farmhands managed to scramble down the side of the pit and rescue the odd little children, but couldn’t get a word of sense out of them. The boy and the girl babbled in a strange language nobody could understand.

Did You Know?

This story is based on true records dating back to the 12th century. They say that the children lost their green colouring and the girl grew up to marry a local man. If you visit Woolpit in Suffolk today, you’ll see green children painted on the town sign. Why do you think they were green?



Unsure what to do with the green-skinned children, they took them to the home of the local lord, Sir Richard de Caine, who was equally astonished.

At first, the children refused to speak and wouldn't eat for many days. But, one morning, when a servant came into the kitchen with freshly harvested green beans, the children grabbed them and devoured them, still in their pods! For several weeks, all they would eat was raw green beans.

Sir Richard summoned doctors and language experts from all over the land, but nobody could work out why

the children had green skin or what new language they were speaking.

And so, the children stayed with Sir Richard. In time, they got used to the bright light and eating different foods, and the little girl even learnt to speak English. When she told Sir Richard how she and her brother came to be at the bottom of the pit and how they came from a land with purple skies, he was stunned. Everyone decided that the two children must be from fairyland.

To this day, who the green children of Woolpit were, and where they came from, remains a great mystery! 🍷



Hidden Treasures

There was once an old farmer who had three sons. The farmer had worked hard all his life and, because of this, his farm was the biggest and best for miles around.

One day, when the farmer was old and weary, he fell ill. Certain that his life was soon going to come to an end, he called his three sons to his bedside.

“Dear sons, I fear I won’t live much longer, so you must listen to this advice I have for you,” he whispered.

“Don’t say that, Father!” cried his sons, but the farmer struggled on.

“Whatever you do, don’t be tempted to sell any of the land on this farm. It has been in our family for generations and it is hiding a huge treasure.”



His sons gasped and drew nearer to the farmer to hear him better.

“I don’t know where it is exactly, but I know that it is there and I am sure that, together, the three of you will find it. When I am gone and you are in charge, put all your effort and energy into it. Leave no patch of soil unturned in your search for it.”

The old farmer closed his eyes, and the three sons looked at each other with astonishment. There had been hidden treasure on the farm all this time and they’d never known about it!

The farmer died peacefully a few days later and, as soon as his funeral had passed, the three sons began digging.

They started in the corner of one field and they dug and turned and dug and turned the soil until their hands were sore and blistered, and their bodies ached. When they found no treasure in that field, they moved on to the next one, and then the next one, and then the next one – and so it went on for several months. ➡



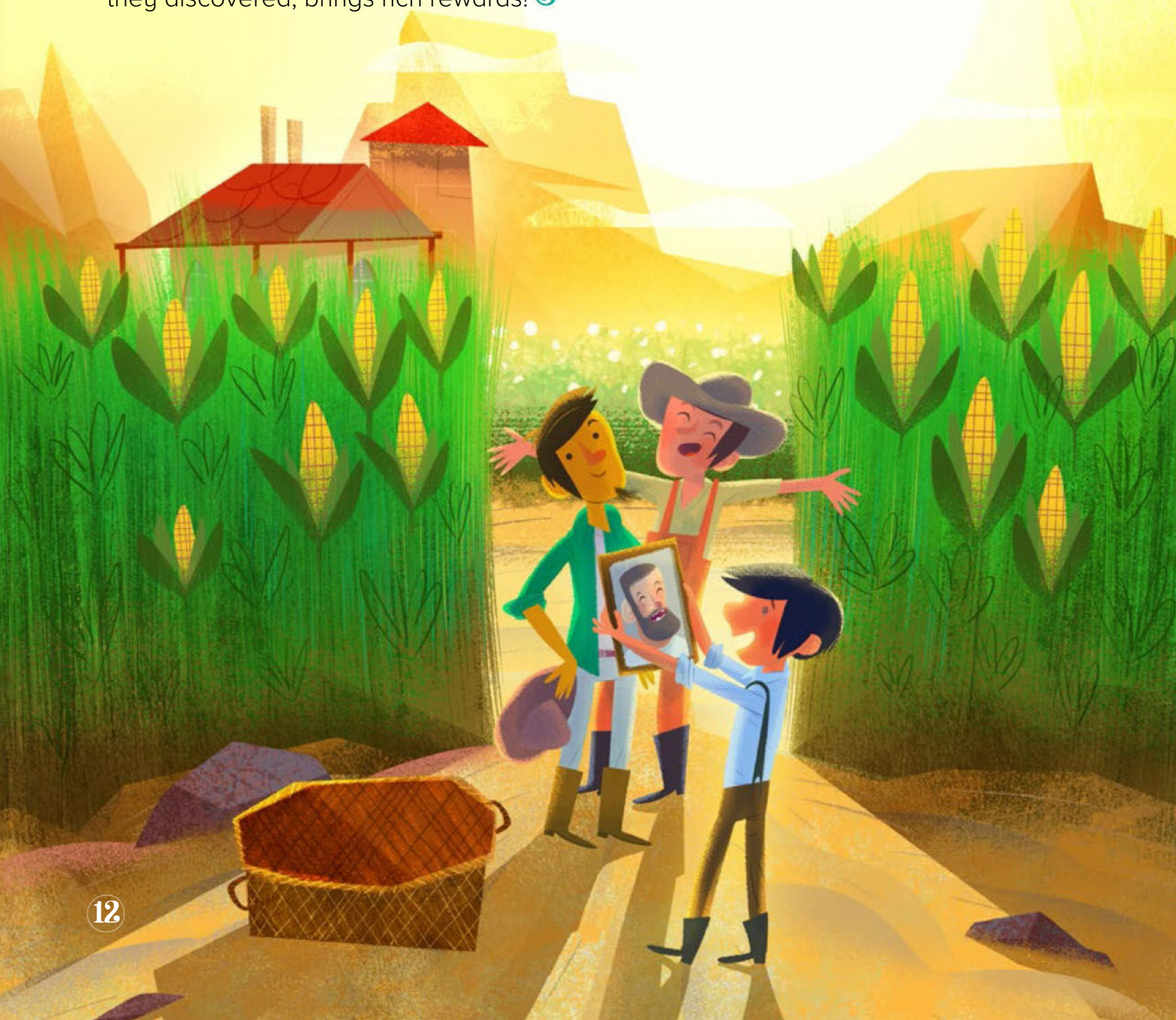
Spot It!

The sons dug up some interesting finds in the field. See if you can spot these three ‘treasures’ in the picture.

When they had dug and turned the soil in every field and found nothing, they began again – this time, digging deeper in their determination to unearth treasure.

At last, when every field had been dug twice and the three sons were far too exhausted to continue with their treasure hunt, they looked around at the farm and realised that this year's crops were taller, healthier and more bountiful than they had ever been before. The fields looked lush and green.

And, at harvest time, when the sons sold their crops for a handsome profit – making far more money than any other farm in the county – they realised that *this* was the hidden treasure their father had been talking about. Hard work, they discovered, brings rich rewards! 🌀



Momotaro

the Peach Boy

In a small village by a large river in Japan, there lived an old man and woman. One day, the old woman was tending her garden when she saw a giant peach bobbing along on the river.

She pulled it out of the water and rolled it all the way to their little house.

“What a find!” said her husband. “Let’s eat it now.” And he took out a knife to cut it in half, but as he was cutting he heard a little voice shout, “Please don’t hurt me!” What a surprise – curled up in the middle of the peach was a little boy!

The old couple named the boy Momotaro, which means Peach Boy, and raised him as if he was their own child. With their love and support, Momotaro grew up to be big and strong, and he became famous for his courage. When he turned fifteen, he went to his parents and said, ➡



"You have been most kind to me, but I would like your permission to go on a quest. I have heard of an island ruled by cruel ogres. They keep kidnapping innocent people and stealing their treasures, and I would like to stop them. Will you let me go?"

His father's eyes shone with pride and his mother's welled with tears.

"Of course you can go, son," said his father. "But take my sword with you."

Meanwhile, the old woman busied herself in the kitchen, making fresh dumplings. "And take these for your journey," she said. "They will give you strength, my brave Momotaro!"



So Momotaro set off with his father's old sword and a big pot of steamed

dumplings. He walked along the dusty road until he met a small dog. The dog growled and bared its teeth. It was getting ready to pounce.

"You don't want to bite me," laughed Momotaro. "I'm Momotaro and I am far stronger than you!"

The dog pricked up its ears. "You're the famous Peach Boy?" it said. "I have heard of your strength. Forgive me; I'm grumpy because I'm hungry."

"So sit and share a dumpling with me," said Momotaro, "and you'll soon feel better."



The two shared a dumpling and it was the best thing the dog had ever eaten. It made him full of energy.

“Where are you going, Momotaro?” asked the dog.

“To the island of the cruel ogres. It’s about time somebody stopped them. You can join me if you like.”

And so Momotaro and the dog set off down the road and through the valley until they reached the forest. As they entered, they heard rustling in the trees above, then a monkey swung down and landed before them.

“Could it be the mighty Momotaro?” asked the monkey. “What brings you to the forest, Peach Boy?”

“I am indeed Momotaro,” said the boy. “And this dog is my friend. We are heading for the island of the ogres to get rid of them once and for all.”

“And you choose to go with a dog?” asked the monkey. “To fight a battle like this, you need an intelligent partner like me!”

The dog snarled and leapt at the monkey, and the two began to fight.

“Break it up now!” cried Momotaro. “Perhaps we can all go together. Let’s sit down and share a dumpling and put aside our differences.” ➡



So Momotaro, the dog and the monkey shared a mouthwatering dumpling. It was the best thing the dog and the monkey had ever eaten.

They set off together through the forest, and Momotaro made the dog walk in front of him and the monkey walk behind him so they wouldn't argue again. They walked through the trees and over the hills until they came to a grassy field.



Soon a large, beautiful pheasant fluttered onto their path. The dog pounced at the pheasant and the two began to fight. "Get out of our way," yapped the dog. "We are on a very important quest with Momotaro."

"Momotaro!" gasped the pheasant. "Forgive me, Peach Boy. I have heard of your great strength. I didn't mean to delay you. What is your quest?"

"We are heading to the island of the ogres," explained Momotaro. "It is time to put an end to their reign of terror."

"Can I help?" asked the pheasant.

"We don't need this stupid bird's help!" cried the monkey.

"No, we don't!" barked the dog.

But Momotaro made them sit together.

"Listen, I need all the help I can get, but you are of no use to me if we can't agree to work in harmony. Let's share a dumpling and be friends."

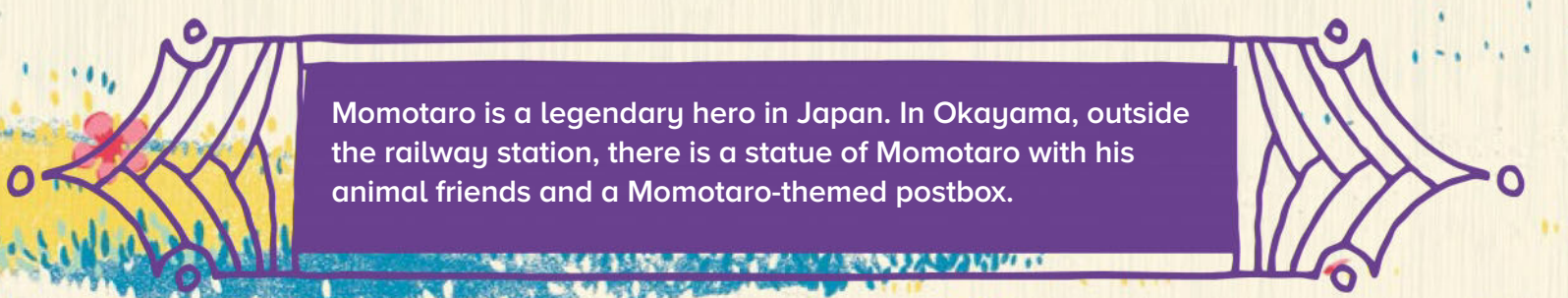
He split a dumpling into four and they shared it. It was the best thing the dog, the monkey and the pheasant had ever eaten. Filled with energy, off they went again, through the fields until they reached the endless sea.



Momotaro saw a sailing boat by the shore and he beckoned the animals towards it, but they all looked scared.

"Are you afraid of the sea?" he asked. "Would you like to go back?"

None of the animals wanted to be cowardly, so they leapt aboard the boat to show him how brave they were. Momotaro climbed in and a brisk wind swept them out to sea. ➡



Momotaro is a legendary hero in Japan. In Okayama, outside the railway station, there is a statue of Momotaro with his animal friends and a Momotaro-themed postbox.





They travelled for a day and a night until at last they saw the ogres' island.

"Now you can be of help," Momotaro said to the pheasant. "Fly ahead to the ogres' stronghold and tell them that I am coming to defeat them."

So the pheasant flew to the ogres' castle and screeched, "Momotaro – the mighty Peach Boy – is coming to fight you. Surrender while you can!"

The ogres sneered, "Are we supposed to be scared of a pheasant?" But the pheasant went on screeching and the ogres grew so angry that they threw their iron clubs at the bird.



Meanwhile, Momotaro was running towards the castle with the dog and the monkey. When they reached the castle, the gates were locked.

"It's your turn now, Monkey," said Momotaro. "Can you climb the walls and open the gates for us?"

The monkey scaled the walls, swung itself over the top and unlocked the gates, then Momotaro and the dog stormed into the castle courtyard, where a great battle began.

The pheasant pecked at the ogres' eyes, the monkey clawed their ugly faces, and the dog bit their thick legs, while Momotaro swung his father's sword so fiercely and powerfully, the ogres were soon forced to surrender. They fell to their knees and begged for mercy. Momotaro and his animal friends were victorious!

Momotaro made the ogres promise they would never attack innocent people again. He forced them to give back their stolen treasures, and he freed their many prisoners. Then Momotaro, the dog, the monkey and the pheasant took the prisoners and their precious belongings back to their boat and they set off for home again.

When all the prisoners were safely home, Momotaro returned to his parents with a sack of jewels he had been given as a reward by the people of Japan. The old man and his wife were overjoyed to see their brave Peach Boy, and Momotaro's reward allowed them all to live in peace and wealth for the rest of their lives, along with their good friends – the dog, the monkey and the pheasant. ⑥

Baba Yaga

Once upon a time, a little boy called Dmitri and his older sister Irina lived with their mother and father in the shadow of a deep, dark forest.

Their home was a sweet cottage with roses around the door, and their garden was filled with trees for climbing and good places to play hide and seek. They were doing just that one morning when their father rushed out and shouted, “Children, quickly, come in! Baba Yaga’s black geese have been spotted!”

The children scrambled out of their hiding places and dashed as quickly as they could into the house, slamming the door behind them.



Baba Yaga was a witch who lived in the forest. She was a little round thing with a big nose, and she had three black geese, which were well known for swooping down and catching little children in their beaks. Nobody knew what happened to the children, but some said Baba Yaga ate them all up!



Later that day, Dmitri and Irina's parents had to go out to the local market to buy some food.

"Be good and stay inside," warned their mother. "And if you behave, we'll bring you some gingerbread!"

Their parents waved goodbye, and Dmitri and Irina sat looking longingly

at their bright, sunny garden. After ten minutes or so, they were restless.

"Maybe we could play by the door?" said Dmitri. "Then if we see the black geese we can run inside easily!"

Irina thought this was a brilliant idea, so they cautiously stepped outside. The black geese were nowhere to be seen and the two children soon forgot their worries and began to run about the garden, playing.

They didn't hear the flap of wings soaring down towards them, and it wasn't until the black geese were level with them that Irina leapt behind a thorny rose bush and cried out, "Run, Dmitri, run!" ➡





Draw It!

Baba Yaga is a famous witch in Russian fairy tales, and she flies around using a mortar and pestle. Find out what that is and draw Baba Yaga flying in one!

When she looked out to see if he was safe, she gasped in horror – one of the black geese had him in its claws.

“Bring back my little brother!” she yelled, but the geese just honked a horrible noise that echoed eerily and sounded like “Baba Yaga”.

Without a moment’s hesitation, Irina chased after them, determined to rescue her brother. She ran as fast as she could, deep into the forest. She soon came to a trickling stream and was about to leap over it when she saw a silver fish lying on its banks.

“Irina, Irina,” it called. “Please help me, I am dying.”

Irina really didn’t want to stop. She wanted to chase after the geese and save her brother from Baba Yaga, but she felt sorry for the fish. She crouched down, scooped it up in her hand and placed it back in the gurgling stream.

The fish sighed with relief.

“Thank you, Irina. Please take this shell as a gift. If you are ever in danger, throw it over your shoulder. It will help!”

Irina thanked the fish, put the shell in her pocket and off she ran, following the distant honking of the geese.



She hadn’t gone far when she saw a squirrel with its paw caught in a trap.

“Irina, Irina,” it wailed. “Please help me, I am injured.”

Irina truly didn’t want to stop. She wanted to chase after the geese and save her brother from Baba Yaga, but the squirrel looked in great pain. She opened up the trap and released it.

It limped away to a nearby oak tree, disappeared into a hole and came out holding an acorn in its little paws.



“Thank you, Irina. Please take this acorn as a gift. If you are ever in danger, throw it over your shoulder. It will help!”

Irina thanked the squirrel, popped the acorn in her pocket and off she ran, even faster this time.



Before long, she saw a little mouse weeping. It was standing beside a mossy bank, where lots of rocks had tumbled down.

“Irina, Irina,” it sobbed. “Please help me, I am homeless.”

Irina desperately didn’t want to stop. She wanted to chase after the geese and save her brother from Baba Yaga, but the mouse looked so upset.

She bent down, rolled a few rocks out of the way and revealed the entrance to the mouse’s hole. It scurried inside and brought out a smooth pebble.

“Thank you, Irina. Please take this pebble as a gift. If you are ever in danger, throw it over your shoulder. It will help!”

Irina thanked the mouse, placed the pebble in her pocket with her other gifts and off she ran again, hoping to catch up with the geese.

She ran as fast as her legs could carry her until, at last, she came to a clearing with Baba Yaga’s house in it. She knew it must be Baba Yaga’s house as she had heard so many stories about it. ➡



*It was a round wooden hut,
which stood on giant
chicken legs!*





Witch Hunt!

Can you see the witch Baba Yaga in this picture? Tick this box when you find her.



The hut could even walk around, but now, it was quite still. The three black geese were lying asleep by the house, so Irina tiptoed up the steps and crept into the hut. There was Baba Yaga the witch, snoring loudly in a chair. She was as small and round as Irina had heard tell, and her nose was indeed very big.



Irina's little brother Dmitri was sitting at the witch's feet and, when he saw Irina, he grinned. The brave little girl leapt forward, grabbed Dmitri in her arms and darted out of the hut. However, her noisy footsteps woke the black geese, who started to honk and flap their wings violently. The commotion soon stirred Baba Yaga, who jumped up, ran to the door of her hut, and saw Irina and Dmitri sprinting away.

"Bring back that boy!" squealed Baba Yaga, but Irina had no intention of stopping. Baba Yaga gave chase and, though her legs were little and thin, she started to gain on Irina, who was struggling to carry her brother.

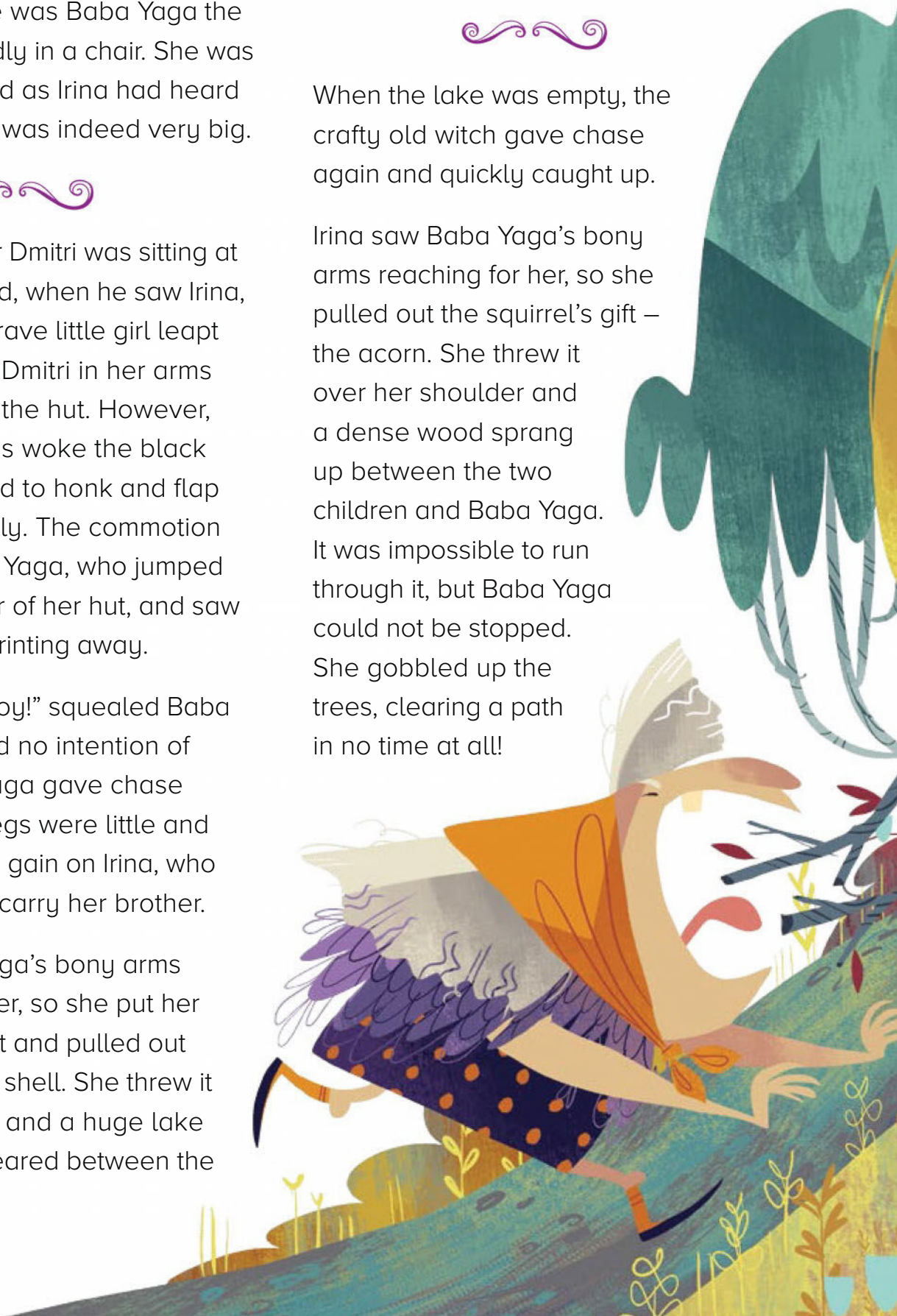
Irina saw Baba Yaga's bony arms reaching out for her, so she put her hand in her pocket and pulled out the fish's gift – the shell. She threw it over her shoulder and a huge lake miraculously appeared between the

children and Baba Yaga. The witch was furious! Irina ran as fast as she could, while Baba Yaga drank up the lake, gulping it down at great speed!



When the lake was empty, the crafty old witch gave chase again and quickly caught up.

Irina saw Baba Yaga's bony arms reaching for her, so she pulled out the squirrel's gift – the acorn. She threw it over her shoulder and a dense wood sprang up between the two children and Baba Yaga. It was impossible to run through it, but Baba Yaga could not be stopped. She gobbled up the trees, clearing a path in no time at all!



When the cunning witch had eaten her way through the trees, she chased after the two children again. Irina saw her bony arms reaching for her, so she pulled out her final gift – the mouse’s pebble. She threw it over her shoulder and up sprang a mountain, blocking Baba Yaga’s path!

The little witch moaned and wailed with frustration. Her belly was so groaningly full of lake water and woody trees, it was impossible for her to eat her way through a mountain, too! Baba Yaga had no choice but to return to her strange hut, while Irina and Dmitri ran all the way home.

They hadn’t been back for long, when their parents returned from the market. “Dmitri! Irina!” they called. “We have delicious gingerbread for you!”

The two children flung their arms around their parents’ necks, happier to see them than ever before. Needless to say, neither of them said a word about their adventure with Baba Yaga! 🌀



The Spider and the Fly

by Mary Howitt

“Will you walk into my parlour?” said the spider to the fly;
“It’s the prettiest little parlour that ever you did spy.
The way into my parlour is up a winding stair,
And I have many curious things to show when you are there.”
“Oh no, no,” said the little fly; “to ask me is in vain,
For who goes up your winding stair never comes down again.”



"I'm sure you must be weary, dear, with soaring up so high.
Will you rest upon my little bed?" said the spider to the fly.
"There are pretty curtains drawn around; the sheets are fine and thin,
And if you like to rest a while, I'll snugly tuck you in!"
"Oh no, no," said the little fly, "for I've often heard it said,
They never, never wake again who sleep upon your bed!"

"Sweet creature!" said the spider, "you're witty and you're wise;
How handsome are your gauzy wings; how brilliant are your eyes!
I have a little looking-glass upon my parlour shelf;
If you'd step in one moment, dear, you shall behold yourself."
"I thank you, gentle sir," she said, "for what you're pleased to say,
And, bidding you good morning now, I'll call another day."

The spider turned him round about, and went into his den,
For well he knew the silly fly would soon come back again:
So he wove a subtle web in a little corner sly,
And set his table ready to dine upon the fly... ➡



Then came out to his door again, and merrily did sing:
“Come hither, hither, pretty fly, with pearl and silver wing;
Your robes are green and purple; there’s a crest upon your head;
Your eyes are like the diamond bright, but mine are dull as lead!”

Alas, alas! How very soon this silly little fly,
Hearing his wily, flattering words, came slowly flitting by;
With buzzing wings she hung aloft, then near and nearer drew,
Thinking only of her brilliant eyes, and green and purple hue,
Thinking only of her crested head. Poor, foolish thing! At last
Up jumped the cunning spider, and fiercely held her fast.
He dragged her up his winding stair, into the dismal den –
Within his little parlour – but she never came out again!

And now, dear little children, who may this story read,
To idle, silly flattering words, I pray you never heed!

Act It Out!

Download our free
Spider and Fly Character
Masks from our website:
storytimemagazine.com/free



Gazelle Girl

In a village in the Atlas Mountains in Morocco, there lived a man called Karim who had a son and a daughter. The two children were very close to their father.

One day, when the children were old enough, Karim announced that he was going away on business. He decided to take his son, Nabil, with him, but his daughter, Naima, was to stay behind and look after the house.

“Naima, you must listen to me,” said her father. “Do not go to the market on your own and don’t let anyone in the house. I have asked the prayer master to check on you, but he will just knock at the door.”

Karim was a little worried about leaving Naima alone, but the prayer master was well respected and trusted.

The father hadn’t been gone long, when the prayer master knocked on the door. He had brought a basket of food and asked if he might come in. Naima remembered her father’s words and politely said no to him. ➡



However, the prayer master returned the following day and asked to come in again, and Naima said no. Every day, he came back and, every day, Naima refused him. The prayer master became more and more insistent until, on the day her father was due to return, he threatened her.

“If you don’t let me in, I will tell your father that you went to the market and allowed strange men into your home.”

Naima was horrified. She didn’t want to bring shame on her family, but she was sure her father wouldn’t believe his ridiculous lies so, for the last time, she refused him.

The prayer master was so outraged, he rode out to meet Karim and told him that his daughter had behaved badly. Karim could hardly believe it, but the prayer master would surely never tell a lie. Karim went red with shame.

“Son, ride ahead and take your sister into the desert. She has disgraced our family and it is the law that she must be banished there.” Karim felt his heart break as he said it.

Nabil rode home with tears in his eyes. He loved his sister very much.

“How could you have shamed us like this?” he asked Naima. “The prayer master has told us everything!”



“He lies!” cried Naima. “I wouldn’t let him into the house, so he is punishing me. Please believe me!”

Her brother looked unsure. “I cannot go against the word of the prayer master or our father. I must take you into the desert. If you are speaking the truth, Allah will protect you.”

So poor Naima was abandoned in the desert. Left all alone there, she sank to the ground and sobbed. Eventually, she curled up and fell asleep and, when she woke the next morning, she found that a herd of gazelles had huddled around her to keep her warm.

Naima stayed with the gazelles and they treated her kindly. They shared their food with her, gave her milk and

kept her warm at night. She even learnt to run as gracefully as a gazelle.



One day, a handsome young king was out hunting in the desert when he saw the strangest sight – a beautiful young woman running with the gazelles.

“I must be dreaming!” he said to his servant. “Do you see what I see?”

The servant also saw the gazelle girl.

“There is one way to know,” said the servant. “Let us offer them two bowls of couscous – one plain and one with spices. If she is human, she will surely prefer the spiced couscous.” ➡



And so the servant approached the herd of gazelles with two bowls. The king was astounded to see an elegant young woman emerge from the herd and dine on the spiced couscous.

The young king stepped out and introduced himself. "Please don't be scared," he said. "I want to help you."

He lifted Naima onto his horse and took her to his palace.

In time, the king and Naima got to know each other better, but she would never reveal to him how she came to live among the gazelles. This made no difference to the king, who had fallen desperately in love with her.

When he asked her to marry him, she happily accepted. Their wedding day was joyful and, soon, they had a beautiful baby boy.



All seemed well, but Naima and the king were unaware that the king's closest advisor was scheming to overthrow him. He had decided that the best way to do this was to destroy the king's happiness. So, one night, he crept into their sleeping baby's room and kidnapped him.

When Naima found her baby missing the following morning, she was grief-stricken. As she searched for the king to tell him, she bumped into the wicked advisor and told him the terrible news.



“You must run away, Queen Naima,” he said slyly. “Everyone knows that if a child goes missing, the mother is to blame. If you leave now, perhaps you will be able to find your baby.”

Naima was horrified by his words, so she ran away from the palace, never looking back, and spent the next few months searching every village far and wide for her missing son, but never with any success.

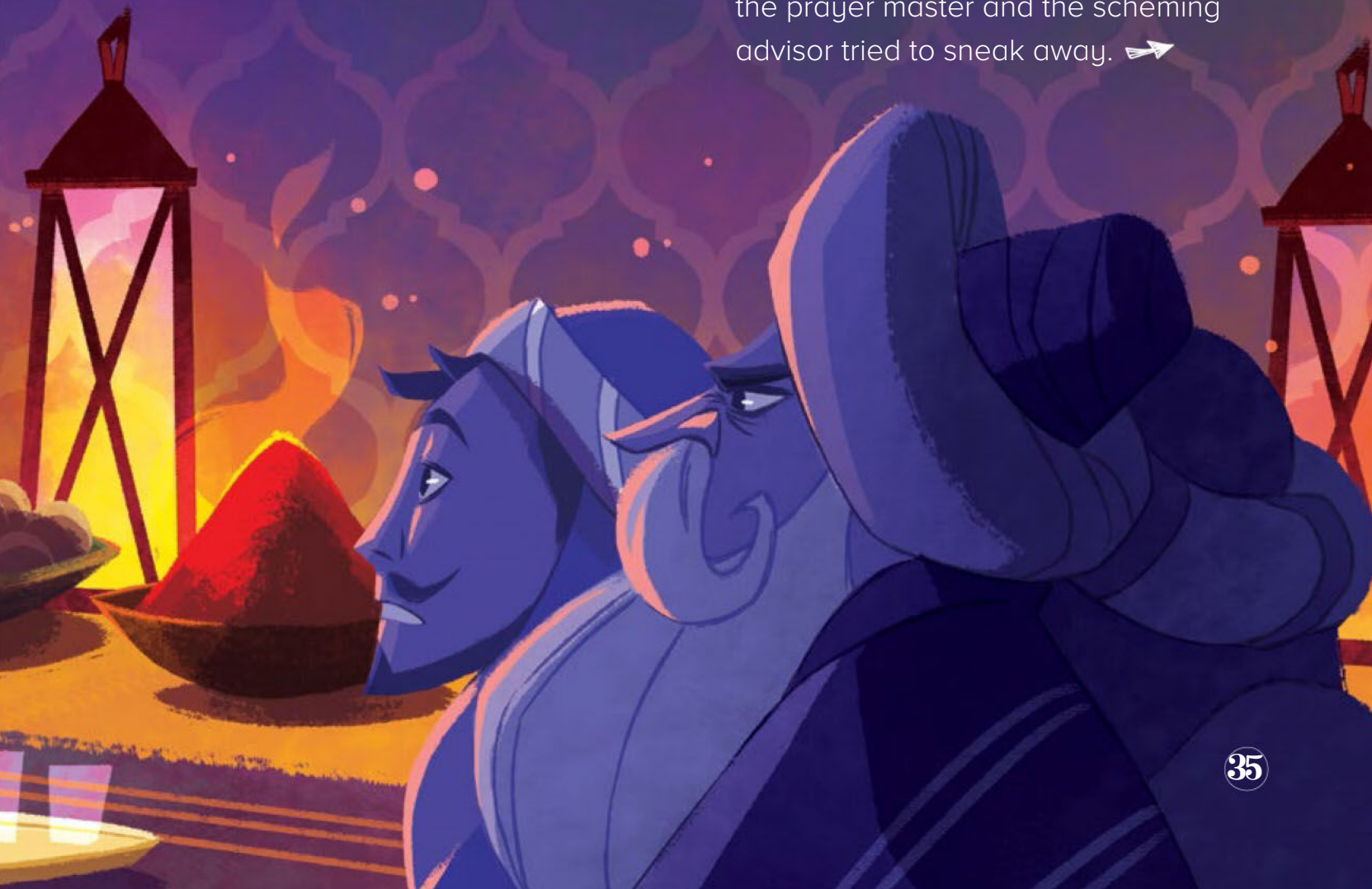


At last, out of luck, money and hope, she settled in a village not far from the castle and got a job working in the kitchen of a restaurant.

One night, a large group came in for dinner. Naima recognised them at once as the king, his advisor, the prayer master and, much to her surprise, her father and brother.

She served them all, but was so dusty and tattered, nobody recognised her. When they had eaten, they asked to be entertained, so Naima came out from the kitchen, where she was washing dishes, and sat before them and told them the story of her life.

As the story unfolded, one by one the men recognised their storyteller. Her father, brother and the king ran up to Naima and embraced her, while the prayer master and the scheming advisor tried to sneak away. ➡



They didn't get very far before the king ordered his guards to arrest them both. Before they were thrown into the palace dungeon, the advisor revealed where he had hidden their baby, so Naima and the king were reunited with their son.

To celebrate their happy reunion, the king passed an important law in memory of the animals who had saved his gazelle girl, Queen Naima. From that day forward, he decreed that no man could hunt or kill a gazelle. 🌀

Write It!

Can you find out five facts about graceful gazelles? Can you find some pictures too?

Pippi Longstocking

By Astrid Lindgren

At the end of a little Swedish town lay an old, overgrown orchard. In the orchard was a cottage, and in this cottage lived Pippi Longstocking.

She was nine years old, and she lived all alone. She had neither mother nor father, which was really rather nice, for in this way there was no one to tell her to go to bed when she was having most fun, and no one to make her take cod liver oil when she felt like eating peppermints.

There was a time when Pippi had had a father, and she had been very fond of him. Of course, she had had a mother too, but that was long ago.

Pippi's mother had died when Pippi was just a tiny baby laying in her cradle and howling so dreadfully that no one could come near. Pippi believed that her mother now lived somewhere up in Heaven and looked down on her little girl through a hole in it. Pippi often used to wave up to her and say, "Don't worry, I can look after myself!"

Pippi hadn't forgotten her father. He had been a ship's captain, and sailed on the great ocean. Pippi had sailed with him on his boat, at least until the time he had blown into the sea during a storm and





disappeared. But Pippi was quite sure that one day he would come back, for she never believed that he had drowned. She was certain that he had come ashore on a desert island, one with lots and lots of cannibals, and that her father had become king of them all and went about all day with a gold crown on his head.

“My father is a Cannibal King; there aren’t many children with so fine a father!” said Pippi, really pleased with herself. “And when my father has built himself a boat he’ll come to fetch me, and then I shall become a Cannibal Princess. What a life it will be.”



Her father had bought the old cottage in the orchard many years ago. He had wanted to live there with Pippi when he grew old and sailed the

seas no longer. But then he had unfortunately been blown into the sea, and as Pippi expected him to return she went straight home to Villekulla Cottage, as their house was called. It stood there furnished and ready and waiting for her. One fine summer’s evening she had said goodbye to all the sailors on her father’s boat. They liked Pippi very much, and Pippi liked them.

“Goodbye, boys!” said Pippi, kissing each in turn on the forehead. “Don’t worry. I can take care of myself!”

She took two things from the boat: a little monkey whose name was Mr Nelson (he had been a present from her father) and a big suitcase full of gold pieces. The sailors stood by the rail and watched Pippi until she was out of sight. She kept on walking without turning round once, with Mr

Nelson on her shoulder and the suitcase firmly in her hand.

“A remarkable child,” said one of the sailors, wiping a tear from his eye when Pippi disappeared from view.

He was right. Pippi was a very remarkable child, and the most remarkable thing about her was her strength. She was so strong that in all the world there was no policeman as strong as she. She could have lifted a whole horse if she had wanted to. And there were times when she did want to. Pippi had bought a horse of her very own with one of her gold pieces the day she came to Villekulla Cottage. She had always longed to have her own horse, and now there was one living on her front porch. When Pippi wanted to take afternoon

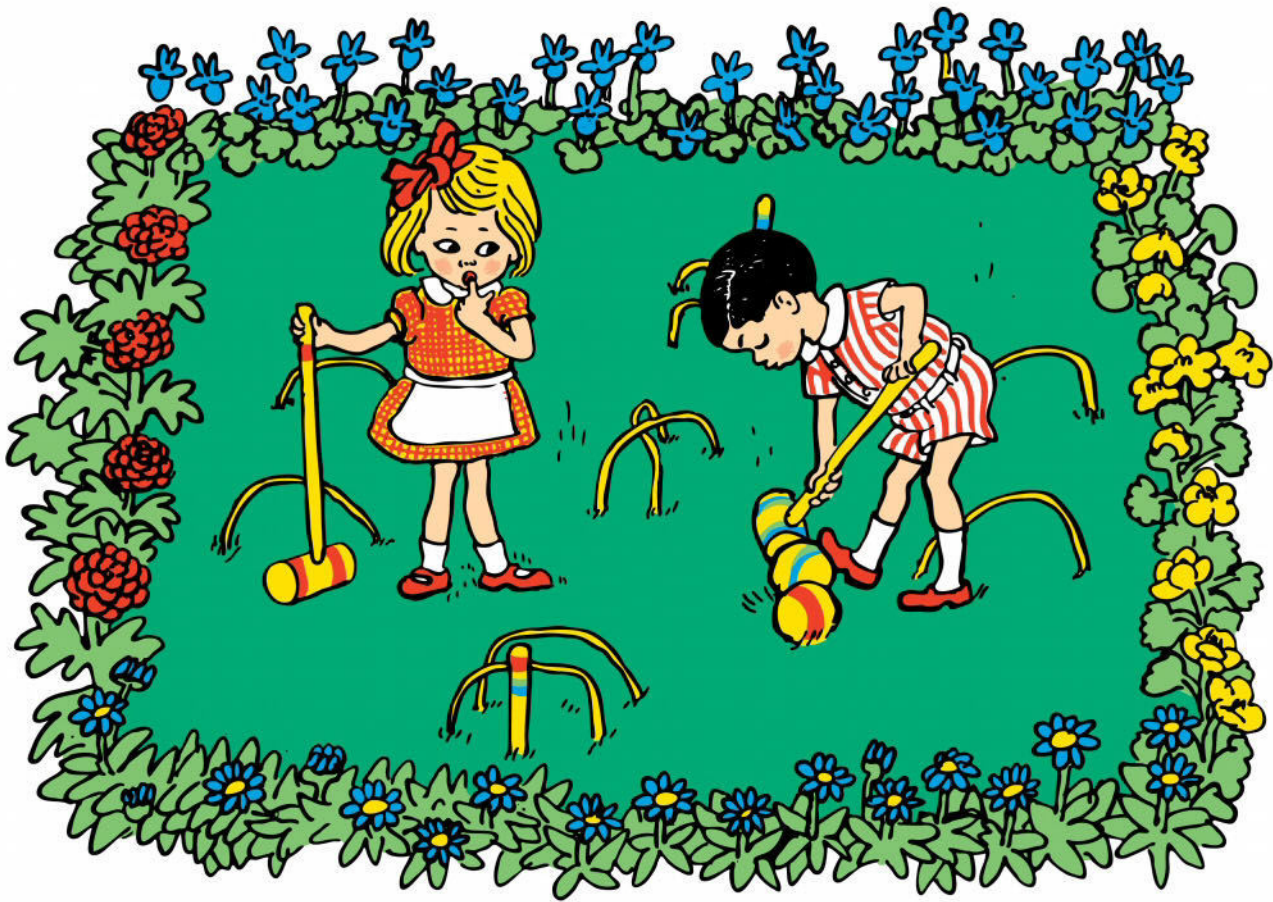
tea there, she simply lifted him out into the orchard without further ado.



Next to Villekulla Cottage lay another orchard and another house. In that house lived a mother and a father with their two nice little children, a boy and a girl. The boy's name was Tommy and the girl's Annika. They were both very good and well-brought-up and obedient children. Tommy never bit his nails, and always did what his mother asked. Annika never fussed when she didn't get her own way, and she was always very properly dressed in freshly ironed cotton.

Tommy and Annika played nicely together in their orchard, but they had often wished for a playmate. ➡





At the time when Pippi always sailed the seas with her father, they would sometimes hang on the fence and say to each other, "What a pity no one moves into that house! Someone ought to live there; someone with children."



The beautiful summer's day that Pippi first crossed the threshold of Villekulla Cottage, Tommy and Annika weren't at home. They were spending the week with their grandmother, and so had no idea that someone had moved into the house next to theirs. The first day after their arrival home, they stood by the gate and looked out on the street, and they still didn't know that there was a playmate so near. Just as

they stood and wondered what they should do, and if possibly anything special would happen that day or if it would be just one of those dull days when one couldn't think of anything in particular to do, why, just then the gate to Villekulla Cottage opened and a little girl appeared. She was the most curious child Tommy and Annika had ever seen. It was Pippi Longstocking going for a morning walk.

This is what she looked like:

Her hair was the same colour as a carrot, and was braided in two stiff pigtails that stood straight out from her head. Her nose was the shape of a very small potato, and was dotted with freckles. Under the nose was a really

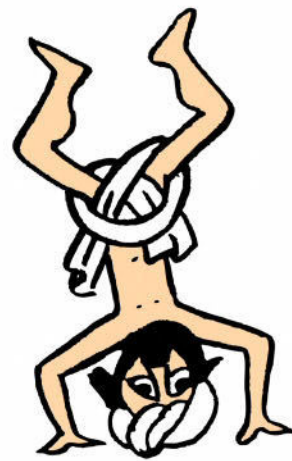
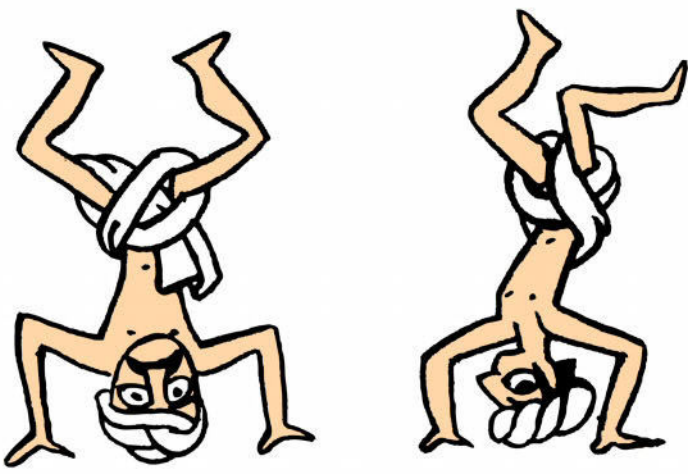
very large mouth, with healthy white teeth. Her dress was curious indeed. Pippi had made it herself. It was supposed to have been blue, but as there hadn't been quite enough blue cloth, Pippi had decided to add little red patches here and there. On her long thin legs she wore long stockings, one brown and the other black. And she had a pair of black shoes which were just twice as long as her feet. Her father had bought them in South America so she would have something to grow into, and Pippi never wanted any others.

The thing that made Tommy and Annika open their eyes widest was

the monkey which sat on the strange girl's shoulder. It was little and long-tailed, and dressed in blue trousers, yellow jacket and a white straw hat.

Pippi went on down the street, walking with one foot on the pavement and the other in the gutter. Tommy and Annika watched her until she was out of sight. In a moment she returned, walking backwards. This was so she shouldn't have to take the trouble to turn round when she went home. When she came level with Tommy and Annika's gate, she stopped. The children looked at each other in silence. At last Tommy said, "Why are you walking backwards?" ➡





“Why am I walking backwards?” said Pippi. “This is a free country, isn’t it?” Can’t I walk as I please? Why, let me tell you that in Egypt everyone walks that way, and no one thinks it the least bit odd.”

“How do you know that?” asked Tommy. “You haven’t been in Egypt, have you?”

“Have I been to Egypt! You can bet your boots I have. I’ve been all over the world and seen odder things than people who walk backwards. I wonder what you would have said if I’d walked on my hands like the people in Indo-China?”

“That can’t be true,” protested Tommy.

Pippi considered this for a moment.

“Yes, you’re right,” she said sadly.

“I wasn’t telling the truth.”

“It’s wicked to lie,” said Annika, who

at last had found her tongue.

“Yes, it’s very wicked,” said Pippi, even more sadly. “But I forget once in a while, you see. How can you expect a child whose mother is an angel and whose father is a Cannibal King and who has spent her life sailing the seas to tell the truth always? And for that matter,” she said, a smile spreading over her whole freckled face, “I can tell you that in the Belgian Congo there isn’t a single person who tells the truth. They tell fibs all day and every day, begin at seven in the morning and keep it up until sunset. So if I should happen to tell a fib sometimes, you must try to forgive me and remember that it’s only because I’ve been a little too long in the Belgian Congo. We can still be friends, can’t we?”

“Of course,” said Tommy, realising suddenly that this wouldn’t be one of those dull days.

“Why not have breakfast at my house, for that matter?” Pippi wondered.

“Well, yes,” said Tommy, “why not? Come on, let’s!”

“Yes,” said Annika. “Right away!”

“But first let me introduce you to Mr Nelson,” said Pippi. The monkey raised his hat to them politely.



And so they went through Villekulla Cottage’s tumble-down orchard gate and up the path between rows of mossy trees (trees lovely for climbing, they noticed) to the house and on to the porch. There stood the horse, munching oats from a soup tureen.

“Why on earth have you a horse on the front porch?” asked Tommy. All the horses he knew lived in stables.

“Well,” said Pippi after thinking it over, “he’d be in the way in the kitchen, and he doesn’t thrive in the parlour.”

Tommy and Annika patted the horse, and then went on into the house. There was a kitchen and a parlour and a bedroom. But it looked as if

Pippi had forgotten to turn out the rooms that week. Tommy and Annika looked carefully about in case that Cannibal King should be in a corner.

They’d never seen a Cannibal King in all their lives. But no father was to be seen, nor any mother, and Annika asked anxiously, “Do you live here all alone?”

“Of course not,” said Pippi. “Mr Nelson lives here too.”

“Yes, but haven’t you a mother and father here?”

“No, none at all,” said Pippi cheerfully. 



“But who tells you when to go to bed at night, and that sort of thing?” asked Annika.

“I do,” said Pippi. “The first time I say it, I say it in a friendly sort of way, and if I don’t listen I say it again more sharply, and if I still don’t listen, then there’s a thrashing to be had, believe me!”

Tommy and Annika didn’t quite understand all this, but they thought perhaps it was a good arrangement.

Meanwhile, they had come into the kitchen, and Pippi whooped:

“Here pancakes will be baked now,
Here pancakes will be baked now,
Here pancakes will be fried now!”

At which she took out three eggs and flung them into the air... 🥚

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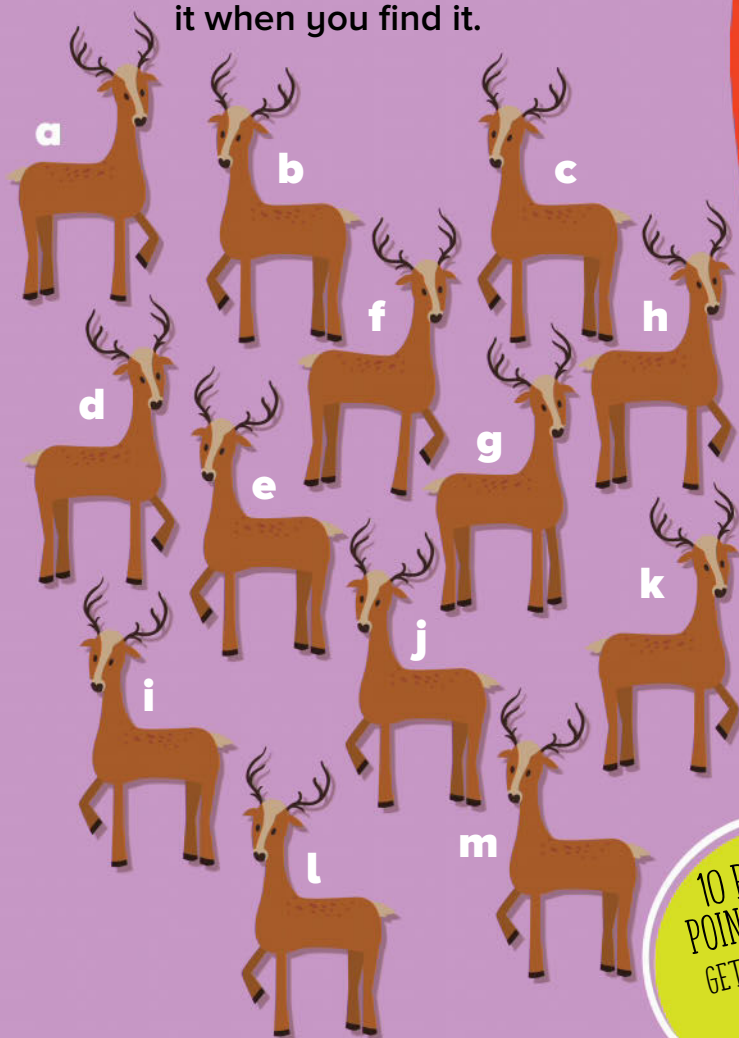


storytime playbox

Escape the spider's spooky parlour, solve our puzzles, and cook up a feast of Pippi Longstocking-inspired pancakes!

① ODD ONE OUT

One of the gazelles in this herd is different to the others. Circle it when you find it.



② HIDDEN WORDS

How many words are hidden inside the word TREASURE? Write them here and score a point for each word you find.

TREASURE

10 BONUS
POINTS IF YOU
GET 25 WORDS
OR MORE!

Score: _____

3

GREEN IS GOOD!

Colour in the Green Children of Woolpit.
How many shades of green can you use?
Colour the sky in purple too!



4

Quick Quiz!

How many dumplings does Momotaro share in total on his journey to the ogres' island?



a 4



b 8



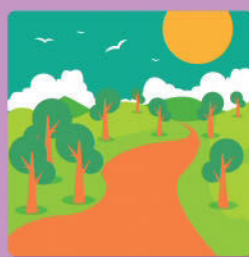
c 3

5 MAGIC MATCH

Can you remember what Irina used to block Baba Yaga's path? See if you can pair up the gifts with their obstacles.



A Mountain



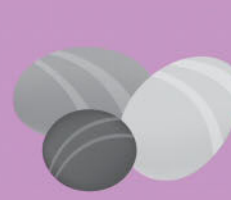
B Forest



C Lake



1 Shell



2 Pebble



3 Acorn

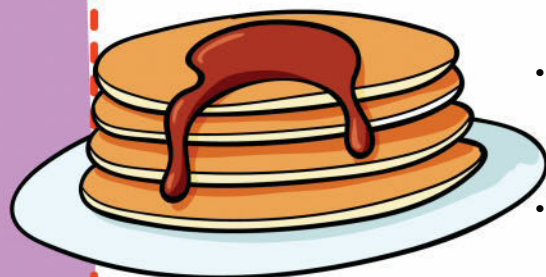


6 MAKE PIPPI PANCAKES!

Make pancakes just like Pippi Longstocking. This recipe makes 12 pancakes, so there's plenty to share with your friends!

YOU NEED:

- 150g plain flour
- 2 medium eggs
- 350ml semi-skimmed or whole milk
- Sunflower oil



- Sift the flour into a large bowl and crack in the two eggs, removing any bits of shell.
- Use an electric mixer or fork to beat the flour and eggs into a smooth mixture.
- Add the milk little by little, beating it into the mixture. It's ready when there aren't any lumps in the batter.
- Pour the sunflower oil into a frying pan and put it on a medium heat. Ask an adult to help you with this bit.
- Pour a ladleful (or large spoonful) of pancake batter into the heated pan. You might need to tilt the pan to make the mixture spread out evenly.
- When it's a light golden colour on the underside, flip or turn your pancake to cook the other side, then stack it on a plate, ready for a pancake pile-up!

TIP! Sprinkle hundreds and thousands on your batter to make a rainbow pancake!

Ask a grown-up!



CAUGHT IN THE WEB!

Can you help the fly escape from the spider's spooky parlour in the centre of the web? Quick, before the spider eats her all up!

Maze Rule!

You can play this two ways – first time, time yourself and see how quickly you can get out of the maze, then try it again, picking up the spider's jewels along the way ... now how long does it take you to escape?



Count It!

How many jewels can you count on this page, including in the spider's web? Write your answer in the box.

Answer: There are 26 jewels.





EXIT

STORY MAGIC

There's more to Halloween books than *Room on the Broom* (though we love that too). Get some recommendations here!

Halloween Reads

Spooky storytimes, under a blanket, by torchlight or candlelight are some of the best – and they don't have to be scary, they can be enormous fun. Here are three of our favourite books...

📖 **Jampires by Sarah Macintyre and David O'Connell** A picture book that's original, full of wit (and jam), and not at all scary. Follow it with a plate of jammy doughnuts and you'll win the best-grown-up-ever award! (David Fickling Books)

📖 **The Dark by Lemong Snicket and Jon Klassen** A brave little boy overcomes his fear of the dark – and this book might just help your own child do the same. With stunning illustrations by Jon Klassen. (Orchard Books)

📖 **The Big Monster Snoreybook by Leigh Hodgkinson** Little monster lovers will adore this vibrant and imaginative picture book, which you can read out with wacky sound effects. Kids will love the clever twist at the end. (Nosy Crow)

Inspiring Resources!

Did you know that we have loads of **fun and free printable downloads** for you? From masks, finger puppets and colouring to resource packs you can use in school or at home, visit storytimeforschools.com/teaching-resources and storytimemagazine.com/free and start downloading!

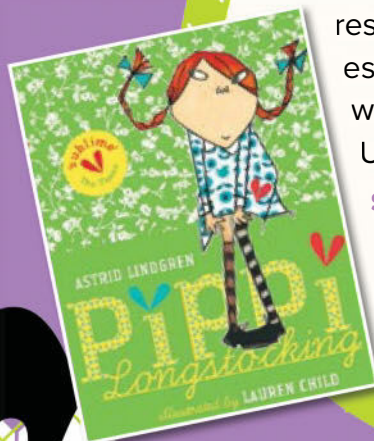
BOOK OF THE MONTH

A modern classic and family favourite, *The Incredible Book Eating Boy* by Oliver Jeffers (HarperCollins Children's Books) celebrates its 10th anniversary this month with a gorgeous special edition, complete with a stunning red cover. Lucky readers, we have five copies up for grabs! Enter our competition at storytimemagazine.com/win



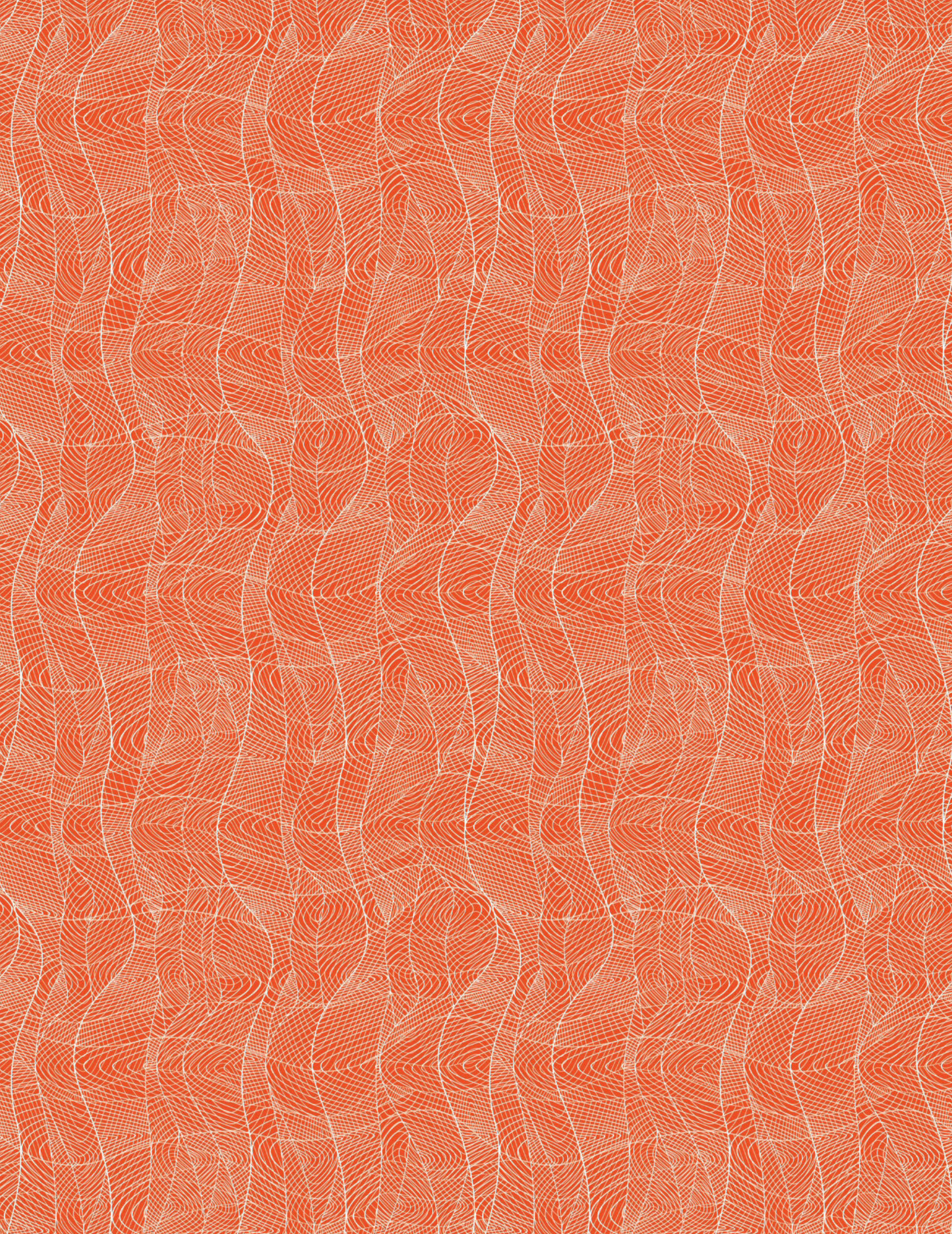
WIN PIPPI!

If you enjoyed this issue's **Brilliant Book** extract, then you'll love the rest of Pippi Longstocking's exciting escapades. To win a copy of this wonderful book from Oxford University Press, visit our website: storytimemagazine.com/win

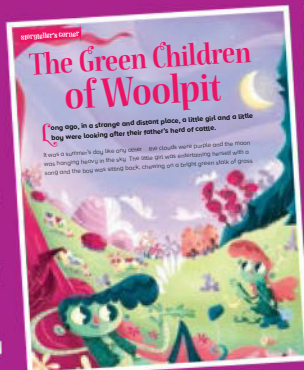


WIN!





ARE YOU FEELING ADVENTUROUS?



Meet mysterious green children



Girl or gazelle? Find out in our magical Middle Eastern tale



Flip pancakes with Pippi!



The Nutcracker
A Christmas Carol, St Nicholas's Surprise, The Red Mitten, Christmas Eve, and more!

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WIN
Brilliant
Books!

Coming
in issue
27

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